

Snow Smart Questions and Answers (FAQs)

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Call the Public Works Department for a free Snow Removal brochure: 303-413-7162.

- Why doesn't the city plow residential streets?
- What is an "accident alert"?
- What is Boulder doing to minimize environmental damage during snow season?
- When does the city plow public bike and pedestrian paths?
- How can I avoid windshield damage during the winter?
- Where do I call to report icy conditions?
- Am I responsible for the sidewalks near my property/residence?
- Snow Smart Facts

Q. Why doesn't the city plow residential streets?

A. Boulder's sunny climate melts most snows in a day or two, and plowing on residential streets blocks parked cars and driveways. Also, plowing residential streets is expensive. If snow crews were to plow all residential streets, the city's plowing operation costs would increase by about 200 percent.

Some homeowner's associations provide snow removal on private streets within their development. Call your homeowner's association to find out if this service is provided for your street.

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Q. What is an "accident alert"?

A. Accident alerts are declared by the Police Department if severe weather conditions exceed their capacity to respond to individual vehicular accidents. During an accident alert, the Police will not respond to vehicular accidents unless there are injuries, or alcohol or drugs are involved.

If you are in a vehicular accident during an accident alert, check for injuries. If no one is injured, move the vehicles out of traffic. Drivers must exchange names, addresses, phone numbers, driver's license numbers, vehicle descriptions and license numbers. The date, time and location of the accident must also be recorded before leaving the scene of the accident. You must also file a report with the Police Department within 24 hours.

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Q. What is Boulder doing to minimize environmental damage during snow season?

A. The city uses alternative deicing and traction materials. The liquid deicing agent is a magnesium chloride solution. Magnesium chloride, a plant nutrient and soil stabilizer, is less corrosive than other deicing products. The traction material is an all-natural high-performance granular deicer. No rock salt is used in the snow removal operation.

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Q. When does the city plow public bike and pedestrian paths?

A. Bike and pedestrian paths are cleared of snow and ice after snow starts to fall. The Broadway Path (Arapahoe to the south city limit) is plowed first, then the Foothills Parkway Path, and then the other paths.

On-street bike lanes are cleared during street snow removal operations. The Boulder Creek Path is cleared by the City Parks Department, 303-413-7200.

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Q. How can I avoid windshield damage during the winter

A. Don't pass spreader trucks or snow plows, and stay three to four car lengths behind these vehicles. The city's spreader trucks have spinners which distribute traction materials across two lanes at a time, and snow plows sometimes push rocks up from the roadway while plowing.
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Q. Where do I call to report icy conditions?

A. During a snowstorm, call the city of Boulder Snow Dispatcher at 303-413-7109 or after hours at 303-413-7177. You may also call city Transportation Maintenance at 303-413-7162 between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also report a problem using the Transportation Report Form.
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Q. Am I responsible for the sidewalks near my property/residence?

A. Yes. City ordinance requires property owners adjacent to a sidewalk to clear the sidewalk of snow and ice by noon the day following a snowstorm. This includes any sidewalk that abuts the property and the portion of the sidewalk that projects across an alley. More information
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Snow Smart Facts:

- Snow plows are wider than one lane. You can avoid getting squeezed on the road (and avoid limited visibility caused by flying snow) by NOT passing snow plows!
- Spreader trucks weigh up to 54,000 pounds when loaded. Because the trucks are heavy, they drive slowly. When you are behind a spreader truck, allow adequate stopping distance. Try to stay 3-4 car lengths behind.
- Using alternative transportation during snow storms reduces the number of vehicles on the roadways, and gives snow plows and spreader trucks more room to operate.
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